FULFILLING THE PROMISE: REPORT of the TASK FORCE on ACCESS to INFORMATION for PRINT-DISABLED CANADIANS

Presented to Roch Carrier, National Librarian, National Library of Canada (NLC) and Euclid Herie, President and CEO of the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB)

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October 31, 2000

Mr. Roch Carrier
National Librarian of Canada
National Library of Canada

Dr. Euclid Herie
President and CEO
Canadian National Institute for the Blind

Dear Sirs:

We, the members of your Task Force on Access to Information for Print-disabled Canadians, are pleased to present you with our report **Fulfilling the Promise**.

We all will be available to work with you on bringing action to the recommendations.

The Task Force
James K. Hugessen
Chair

List of Names

Chair: 'The Honourable Mr. Justice James K. Hugessen, Federal Court of Canada

Gwynneth Evans, Director General, National and International Programs, National Library of Canada

Elizabeth Gayda, President, Learning Disabilities Association of Canada, Ottawa, Ontario

Barbara Greeniaus, Director, Library Services Branch, Ministry of Municipal Affairs, Victoria, B.C.

Monique Lecavalier, Assistant Director, Bibliothèque des lettres et des sciences humaines, Université de Montréal, Montréal, Que.

Donna Pletz Passey, Chair, Canadian Association of Educational Resource Centres

Graham Stoodley, Q.C., Member of the CNIB National Board of Directors and Chair of the Client Services Committee

André Vincent, President and Director General, Les éditions du troisième oeil, Longueuil, Que.

Acknowledgements

The Task Force members wish to thank their sponsors for the opportunity to provide recommendations to improve access to information for print-disabled Canadians. This opportunity allowed us to meet with Canadians from coast to coast and better understand the concerns of those citizens.

We also wish to thank all those who participated in consultations with us, either as presenters or submitters of written materials.

The Task Force members wish to acknowledge the outstanding contribution that Mary Frances Laughton, Executive Secretary, made in providing timely, helpful administrative and technical support in the writing of the report. We also appreciated her wise counsel and great good humour.

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1. Introduction: A call to action

> "By the year 2000, we will make the new information and knowledge infrastructure accessible to all Canadians."
>
> *The Right Hon. Jean Chrétien, Prime Minister*
> *September 23, 1997 Address in reply to*
> *The Speech from the Throne*

The issue of access to information for print-disabled Canadians has been studied and discussed for too long. More than 3 million Canadians with print disabilities have needs that must be met to fulfil the Prime Minister's promise.

Access to information that enables one to be a full participant in society is a right.

Our Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms states:

> "15(1) Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability."(1)

On October 9, 1997, the Supreme Court of Canada delivered its most significant decision for persons with disabilities in the case of Eldridge v British Columbia (Attorney General) (1997) 151 D.L.R. (4th) 577 (Eldridge). In a unanimous decision, the Court held that the Government of British Columbia must ensure that sign language interpreter services are available free of charge when required by people who are deaf to effectively communicate with health care practitioners. Justice Laforest in his judgement said "it is unfortunate that the history of disabled persons in Canada is largely one of exclusion and marginalization. ... The government position that no interpreter services need be provided... "bespeaks a thin and impoverished

vision of Section 15(1) of the Charter. It is belied more importantly by the thrust of the court's equality jurisprudence. This court has repeatedly held that once the state does provide a benefit, it is obliged to do so in a non-discriminatory manner..."(2)

In accepting the Franklin Delano Roosevelt International Disability Award on March 2, 1998, the Honourable Jean Chrétien said, "A critical goal in Canada is ensuring that all Canadians get to share in what Canada has to offer and that they can contribute to making Canada even stronger. We believe that we simply cannot afford to exclude Canadians with disabilities from our social and economic development. We would short change them and just as important we would short change our society and its future economic prosperity."(3)

A number of other laws and regulations informed this Task Force in its deliberations (Note 1). Canada's regulatory basis is one of the best in the world in support of persons with disabilities. It is, however, unfavourably compared to the United States which has the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The ADA provides a well-used basis for legal action. In Canada, citizens have so far been slow to use the courts to ensure their Charter rights. The government should recognize those rights without waiting to be forced to do so.

In **Preparing for a Digital World: Final Report of the Information Highway Advisory Council** (4), there is a statement that Canadians with disabilities require access to the Information Highway and a number of actions are identified. In response to this report and also to **A Will to Act** (5), the report of the Scott Task Force, the Interdepartmental Committee on Information and Communications Technologies was established as part of the Federal Disability Agenda (Note 2). Its work resulted in recommendations and costed plans that were presented by then Minister of Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC), Pierre Pettigrew, to and approved by key Cabinet colleagues in Spring 1998. Ministers approved these plans as part of the Disability Agenda but the Agenda was not funded in either the 1999 or the 2000 budgeting exercises.

Access to information for print-disabled Canadians has also been studied in Parliamentary Committees and in other Task Forces and directed government studies. Two major recommendations from the report on the **Future Role of the National Archives of Canada and the National Library of Canada** (6), written by John English, formed a basis of discussion for this Task Force:

> "Access to AMICUS (bibliographic database service containing 20 million full bibliographic records, 562,000 authority records and 35 million holdings of 500 Canadian libraries, including NLC) should be a free search service, available in Canada and internationally on the internet with web browser interfaces that are suitable for individual researchers and library and archives staff, including those using adaptive technologies to overcome visual impairment and physical disabilities."

> "The National Library of Canada should establish a partnership with the CNIB. Such a partnership might include NLC facilitation of access to electronic government information and NLC acquisition and preservation of digital publishers' files in order to make them accessible to alternative format producers."

The recent report on the future of the book publishing industry, **Challenge for Change** (7) had several pertinent recommendations:

> "5.3: The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada provide additional funding to the National Library of Canada, beginning in the fiscal year 2000-2001, so that its AMICUS services may be provided at no cost to its users."

> "5.5: The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada, in consultation with the National Literacy Secretariat, the provinces, writers, publishers, booksellers, librarians, educators, and the general public, maintain and enhance its support for literacy programs, including programs for print-disabled Canadians."

> "6.8: The Committee recommends that the Department of Heritage work with key book industry stakeholders to ensure that digitized Canadian-authored titles are available for printing on demand and e-books in such a way that copyright is protected."

If the questions and problems are so clearly identifiable and the solutions so evident, it is no surprise that print-disabled Canadians ask: What is the difficulty in implementing them?

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2. Applying the Access Lens

The situation in Canada, while it may appear bleak, is functioning to the best of available capacity. What is required is an increase in capacity and the coordination of local efforts. There are many willing stakeholders, many willing volunteers and many needs. The Task Force has been charged by those it has heard to recommend the coordination and strengthening of the links between and among individual and local programmes to ensure that they may be maintained and used to serve all print-disabled Canadians.

Past and present National Librarians of Canada have stressed the importance of the right of equitable access to information for all Canadians and have been instrumental in encouraging policy changes to ensure this right. Mr. Carrier, National Librarian since October 1,1999, has also taken leadership in seeing that policy changes directly improve access to information, library collections and services for Canadians in every part of Canada. For this reason, he was a major contributor to the study of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage on the status of the book industry in Canada and together with Euclid Herie sponsored the work of this Task Force. The Task Force was formed in June 2000 with reporting planned for

October 31, 2000. Its membership and Terms of Reference are shown in Appendix 1.

There were five principles by which the Task Force worked:

- The Task Force took the position that print-disabled Canadians include not only those with vision impairment but also the large number of citizens who have a learning disability or who cannot read print due to physical or motor impairments or incapacities.
- The Task Force assumed that all Canadians have a right to access all publicly available print information in a timely, affordable and equitable manner.
- In order not to diminish the rights of individual Canadians, governments have a duty to provide information and their publications simultaneously in the formats in which print-disabled Canadians access this material: large print, audio, braille and/or e-text.
- The Task Force heard from individuals with print disabilities; assistants of those with print disabilities; alternate format producers from the public, not-for-profit and private sectors; service providers from the public, not-for-profit and private sectors; and advocacy groups. In almost every case, these persons were convinced that the Task Force should build on established organizations and programmes that exist across Canada to serve in the production and delivery of information and publications. These same people were equally convinced of the need for the federal government to take a leadership role in ensuring a coordinated, holistic and policy-based approach that would have sustainable funding, accountability and representation of all stakeholders.
- In order to ensure that print-disabled Canadians benefit from a service or programme, those services or programmes must be well known and understood.

As stated by Lorraine McQueen and restated in the submission from the Canadian Library Association (CLA), "CLA deplores the lack of an integrated, coordinated, sustained and sustainable effort to address the rights of Canadian citizens who are unable to read print... Yet, on the subject of access for print-disabled citizens, we compare unfavourably to Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway, Russia, South Africa, Sweden and the U.S., all of whom have national policies adopted by government and sanctioned by law." More on the comparison between Canada and other countries can be found in Appendix 2.

The Eldridge decision and the policy directions identified in the Federal Disability Agenda make it clear that the federal government has a key role in promoting and ensuring full access to information for print-disabled Canadians. This role pertains not only to government information but to the information required by individuals to participate as full citizens. The Task Force sets forth its recommendations to assist the government in meeting this responsibility.

The methodology for the operation of the Task Force was based on the following: to review and synthesize recent Canadian reports that identify issues related to access to information and technology for print-disabled Canadians; to study production and service models from other jurisdictions to assess their relevance for Canadians; and to consult with print-disabled persons and information producers and service providers in government, the not-for-profit and private sectors on the systems and services needed to support a national sustainable service of access to information and knowledge for print-disabled persons.

Information describing the Task Force and its activities was made available through multiple listservs; direct mailing in print and multiple alternate formats to a list of more than 290 addresses including all colleges and universities; a large number of disability organizations and interested Canadians; e-mail; media public service announcements; two dedicated listservs (bilingual and French only) and a website.

Two consultation documents, one for end-users and one for producers, were prepared and widely disseminated. These documents which formed the basis for written comments can be found in Appendix 3. In addition, a list of the more than 75 individuals and organizations who submitted written briefs is listed in Appendix 4. Submissions were received from every province in Canada as well as from the Yukon Territory.

Public consultations were held in six cities (Winnipeg, Halifax, Vancouver, Toronto, Montreal and Ottawa) between August 22 and September 25, 2000. At least 4 members of the Task Force were present at each session. Following each session, summaries were written, distributed through the listservs and posted on the web site. A list of those 38 individuals who presented an oral submissions is in Appendix 5.

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3. Definition of Print Disability

The Copyright Act has a definition of print disability, which it calls perceptual disability, on which much of the federal decision-making is based.

> "perceptual disability" means a disability that prevents or inhibits a person from reading or hearing a literary, musical, dramatic or artistic work in its original format, and includes such a disability resulting from (a) severe or total impairment of sight or hearing or the inability to focus or move one's eyes, (b) the inability to hold or manipulate a book or (c) an impairment relating to comprehension (8)

Michael Schwake, a second year student at the University of Alberta defined print disability as follows:

> "I believe that I am print-disabled even though I am not blind. I have multiple learning disabilities which include the following: central auditory processing disorder; neuromotor deficits; dysgraphia, it takes

> me 29 seconds to write my name; dyslexia; other perceptual problems; short term memory problems; ADHD."

The following is the definition used by Recordings for the Blind and Dyslexic (RFB&D), a audio and e-book service in Princeton, New Jersey.

> "Print disabilities are impairments that prevent people from reading standard print due to a visual, perceptual or physical disability. These disabilities include, but are not limited to: blindness, physical handicaps, visual impairment, dyslexia and other types of learning disabilities."

L'Institut Nazareth et Louis Braille (INLB) provided a definition based on the definitions of impairment, disability and handicap adopted by the Quebec Committee of the Canadian Society on the International Classification of these terms.

> "The incapacity encountered by any persons with a severe long-term disability, as defined by the ICIDH and which denies them access to common printed information considered normal for a human being" [translation]

Vince Tomassetti, a student at Simon Fraser University, defined print disability as follows: difficulty or inability to read readily available printed materials such as books, newspapers, magazines, forms. This definition extends to include text on a computer screen.

No definition completely captures the needs of all print-disabled Canadians. A common concern heard throughout the consultations was the need for a person with learning disabilities to prove his or her disability through costly and repetitive testing with no financial support. Since most print disabilities are permanent or progressively degenerative, the need to pay for testing is an unfair and costly imposition on print-disabled citizens. Also, since anyone who does not have a disability is unlikely to identify themselves as having one, the identification of print-disabled persons should be left up to the persons concerned.

REC. 1. The Task Force recommends that self-identification be sufficient to give a person with learning disabilities the right of access to multiple alternate format materials.

The Task Force heard from many in the community of persons with learning disabilities that they are not allowed to use the very fine services of the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) Library for the Blind in the same way as CNIB clients do. The CNIB does clear copyright for other print disabilities and the materials it makes available through its public library partners are also not restricted.

REC. 2. The Task Force recommends that the Canadian National Institute for the Blind energetically pursue the extension of its library services to all print-disabled Canadians.

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4. User and Server Population Profile

User Population Profile

As recently as September 16, 2000, the Toronto Star (9) pointed out that Canadians do not have current statistics on Canadians with disabilities. The last complete Health and Activities Limitations Survey (HALS) was done with the 1991 census. In the ensuing decade, the population has changed considerably. The good news is that there have been consultations with the community of persons with disabilities to prepare for HALS 2001 (10).

It is estimated that 15% to 17% of the Canadian population has a disability. In 1991, about 39% of Canadians over 65 had one or more types of impairment: mobility, agility, hearing and visual. This percentage dropped to 12.5% in the group from 15–64 years of age and to 6.8% for those 14 years and younger. As the population ages, the number of Canadians with disabilities will increase. With the higher levels of formal education represented by the baby boom generation, we can expect that individuals will be more demanding of their governments, and that a far greater range of services will be expected than has been made available to their parents.

Other types of disabilities can also create print-disabilities. Principal among these are learning disabilities. A learning disability is a distinct, lifelong, neurological condition which encompasses, among others, disorders affecting print. Among those disorders relevant to print are executive function (e.g. attention, organization and planning) and academic functions related to reading (e.g. decoding, comprehension and fluency). It is estimated that one in ten Canadians has a learning disability and many of those persons have difficulties with print.

Persons with motor disabilities can also find themselves as print-disabled when they are unable to hold a book or a newspaper, turn a page or work with traditional computer equipment.

A conservative estimate of the number of print-disabled Canadians is 10% of the population or 3.2 million individuals.

The Task Force learned from the community that they need timely information on a wide range of subjects depending on whether the person is in the formal education system, in the workplace, retired or coping with everyday life. Required materials relate directly to the task at hand, a braille copy of a textbook, an audio version of a manual or the reading for a book

club. These same persons noted that for entertainment, learning or personal growth and independence, they need materials that supplement the absolute necessities of life. Such materials take the form of newspapers, magazines, travel brochures, etc.

What Users Told Us

The Task Force heard unanimity in both the oral presentations and written submissions on the issues that create barriers to accessible information for print-disabled Canadians and a remarkable consensus on the solutions to equitable access. To give voice to the analysis of the barriers and the solutions, the Task Force has chosen the following quotations:

Brian Lendrum (totally blind since infancy; he travelled from Whitehorse to Vancouver at his own expense)

> "For me the Task Force has the mandate and expertise to assist me in reading what I want, when I want. That should be the goal".

Michael Schwake

> " the label 'learning disabled' is not understood by people with several degrees behind their names. This leads to misunderstandings that I may be of considerably lower intelligence than what I truly am. I therefore get treated as though I was retarded, slow, dumb - you name it - it happens. This means that they are prejudiced or in a biased frame of mind when my papers are marked, especially when I am forced to hand-write. Students with disabilities do not get an unfair advantage by having accommodations to the learning environment; it only levels the playing field when done appropriately."

Council of Canadians with Disabilities (a national, cross-disability advocacy organization)

> "the inability to understand print information has serious implications for a person's ability to shop, cook, pay bills, work, fill out their income tax form, participate in the election process, order from a menu, read books for pleasure, take classes, participate in training courses, programme the VCR and engage in a whole range of other daily tasks and activities. For blind people, computer technology can greatly assist in understanding print information; yet even in 2000 it is not the full answer to overcoming all of the barriers to accessing print information... People with learning disabilities have difficulty reading and assimilating print information... providing for this population's needs requires the co-ordination of a master strategy, conscientiously hammered out with all senior governments and, especially with the disability community."

National Federation of the Blind: Advocates for Equality (members in 6 provinces and 1 territory representing blind, vision impaired and deaf-blind Canadians through advocacy and public education initiatives)

" The inability to access information affects such fundamental skills as literacy, independence and advancement within society."

Marjorie Fulton (blind senior)

"I am concerned that the increasing number of elderly people who lose vision are to be programmed by the low expectations that have bedevilled the lives of blind children and working-age adults for generations. Too many parents, teachers, rehabilitation specialists and others have conveyed the impression that not much competence in daily living and not much achievement in learning is expected of them. I do expect the Task Force, in preparing its recommendations, to think of elderly blind people as competent, adaptable, resourceful persevering human beings, like younger blind people."

Mary Ann Epp, Langara College, B.C., on behalf of the Canadian Association of Educational Resource Centres

"Access means that students have the right material at the right time in the right format. The materials must meet the following criteria: ease of use, timeliness, appropriateness of formats, effective teaching and learning methods, and promotion of independence in accessing the learning resources... However, there are major impediments that should be addressed at both the provincial and the national level. These issues relate to developing awareness of the issues, designing policy, improving communication, changing production methods, expanding funding opportunities, enhancing access and promoting collaboration."

Peter Webster of the Ferguson Library for Print Handicapped Students, Patrick Power Library, St Mary's University told us of the need for a single agreed upon definition for special materials eligibility; full and open access to the large collections of special needs materials from RFB&D through a negotiated national arrangement; a more complete and current union catalogue of special needs materials in the currently free web accessible National Library union catalogue, AMICUS; and the clearinghouse of e-texts from publishers, including textbooks.

Michelle Brulé, Institut nationale canadienne pour les aveugles - Division du Québec

"A few Quebec statistics serve to illustrate the chasm in question. In 1994, according to the data of the ministère de la Culture et des Communications, visually impaired persons could rely on only two specialized libraries as opposed to 968 public libraries for the remainder of the population of Quebec, that is one library for 3,621 visually impaired persons as opposed to one library for 1,959 seeing persons! ... Those two specialized libraries received a total amount of $569,500 in subsidies, or 33% less per capita as compared with the remainder of the population. ... Furthermore, for the same year, the number of new print titles published in Quebec numbered 35,000.

> Yet, the total number of titles available in the two libraries' collections as a whole barely reached 15,000. And, even though, taking in good and bad years, several hundred titles are added to them, the least we can say is that the gaping abyss is not narrowing! As for the accessibility of other information and reference services in the specialized French language libraries in Canada, they are hardly worth speaking about.
>
> ... An American study shows that 90% of the people who use Braille as the main means for access to information find jobs for themselves. But, ask these "privileged" people if the documentation they need for working is accessible to them. What can we say, for example, of the blind teacher who doesn't have his or her teacher's handbook? What can we say about blind musicians who don't have their scores? Are there only three Braille music transcribers for the whole of Canada? ... The restrictions regarding written information affect the everyday activities of all blind persons, whether it is buying household appliances (digital electronic technology is above all visual) or overcoming certain architectural barriers. Twenty years after the International Year for Disabled Persons there are still inaccessible elevators; witness the story of the blind yet resourceful person who travelled up and down a 28-floor hotel for 3/4 of an hour before anyone came to his assistance." [translation]

From Claudette Gudbranson of the Learning Disabilities Association of Canada:

> "Technology has taken over the industrial world. From car repairs, to printing presses, to sheet metal, and tooling, the computer is the worker's companion. Many do not provide training manuals (safety, machines etc) on audio cassettes or video.... The isolation and missed opportunities caused by the lack of access to the printed word reduces the individual with a print disability to feel disconnected and not contributing to society."

From quotes such as these and others, the Task Force were convinced that the information needs of print-disabled Canadians are the same as those without a print disability and that those information needs are not being met in Canada.

Distribution and Producer Population Profile

The following section provides an indication of the roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders in the production and provision of alternate format materials in Canada.

The National Library of Canada

The National Library of Canada (NLC) is responsible for developing a world-class resource for the study and appreciation of Canada and providing an effective gateway for Canadians to have access to the world of information. To accomplish this, the Library acquires, preserves and makes accessible

materials written by Canadians, about Canada and published in Canada; it makes available AMICUS - the union catalogue; and it provides services and public programming for publishers, libraries and institutions and individuals, within the framework of international standards and best practices. There are more than 20 million records in AMICUS, of which only 250,000 are audiobook, braille or large print, as well as a very small number of records for described videos.

Canadian Association of Educational Resource Centres

Canadian Association of Educational Resource Centres (CAER) represents producers of braille, large print, audio and e-text for various provincial Ministries of Education. Individually, they produce and/or circulate texts for students from Kindergarten to Grade 12 and in some provinces to students in post secondary institutions. Through CAER, each provincial resource centre is able to share their braille and alternate format texts with one another, increasing their ability to service students who are blind and perceptually impaired. CAER relies on AMICUS to search for titles inter-provincially. This group meets annually to reinforce their collective knowledge of students with disabilities and the production of materials, the delivery of services and their commitment to share their resources among members.

Canadian Association of Disability Service Providers in Post-Secondary Education

The members of the Canadian Association of Disability Service Providers in Post-Secondary Education (CADSPPE) provide comprehensive support services to college and university students with disabilities. A significant percentage are print-disabled, due to problems related to visual acuity, difficulties in the processing of print because of a learning disability or through conditions that prohibit the physical manipulation of text. To provide access to print, member institutions operate non-standard transcription services and borrow from more standardized sources in Canada and the United States. Some have begun requesting an electronic file from the publisher. However, there is no coordination or standardization of production, service or funding support.

Assistive devices are acquired by post-secondary students through a number of channels. In Ontario, for example, through the Assistive Devices Programme, students may be compensated for 75% of the costs of equipment up to $5000. In Quebec, the Régie de l'assurance maladie de Québec supports 100% of the cost of devices for students. Other provinces have no such programme. If the Special Needs Services of the college or university confirm the needs of a student, the individual is eligible for a grant, which comes through the transfer of funds from the federal government to the province. The maximum sum of the grant is $5000 per year and is considered taxable income. In some cases, there is a one-time grant for a computer, but laptops are not eligible. One of the major concerns both of students and their service providers is that they are equipped to work as efficiently and effectively as possible, so that they have equitable opportunities to benefit from education. The portability and transitioning of assistive devices is central to the resolution of this issue.

Library Systems

Public Libraries

Public libraries play a vital role in the lives of Canadians and are extensively used from coast to coast. For many Canadians, the public library is part of the integral fabric of their everyday lives. (Note 3) With the increasing importance of information, the public library has a significant role to play. The Canadian public library system is composed of more than 3600 library branches, located in all sizes of communities, from tiny hamlets to huge metropolitan areas. This national network of libraries exists to serve all Canadians, regardless of education level, culture, income or abilities. Financial support for Canadian public libraries comes from all three levels of government, with the largest share being provided by the local, municipal or regional government. Each province or territory administers its own public library legislation and provides a range of programmes to support its public libraries.

In recent years, governments and the private sector have recognized that public libraries are strategically positioned to provide key public access points to the Internet and almost all public libraries have taken up that challenge with enthusiasm. With assistance from provincial governments, from Industry Canada and from private sources, including the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, virtually every public library in Canada now provides public access to the Internet.

The role of the public library is to be an information equalizer or provider of equal access for all. Although public libraries are deeply committed to serving all of the members of their respective communities, including those with print disabilities, a terrible lack of resources jeopardizes these services.

Almost all public libraries maintain a lending collection of large print books. Most public libraries buy and circulate audiobooks and many public libraries are able to provide home delivery services to persons who are unable to get to the library. Some public libraries will provide materials in electronic text; a few libraries have adaptive technology installed on work stations to make them accessible to the print-disabled; even fewer have braille materials available for loan.

The following comments from providers underline the problem:

From Janet Ritchey, Homes Service Coordinator, Burnaby Public Library:

> "In addition to the print disability they are dealing with, most people also have mobility concerns due to poor health and lack of transportation. Television is of very limited use to them without descriptive video services. They are not braille literate. This is why our users say to us, one after another, over and over again through the years in reference to audiobooks "This service is a lifeline for me", "I'd go mad without these audiobooks", or "I don't know how I'd

> manage without them"... what print-disabled Canadians should expect is simultaneous access to the audio format at the same time the print version is made available to the public. What exists now is a time consuming process by which libraries submit titles for acceptance or rejection. It is rare that a title is in the user's hand fewer than two years into the process - unacceptable. Inadequate funding is a major factor."

From Bette Cannings of North Vancouver Public Library:

> "Good books - in large print or audio - are a lifeline to older readers with sight impairments, and Canadian readers are ill-served. While libraries began to circulate large print books as early as the mid-sixties (venerable English Ulverscroft brought out its first titles in 1964), we are still waiting for a Canadian publisher who can supply more than a short list of old (albeit wonderful) standbys. "

Post Secondary Institutions

Canada has more than 300 private and public colleges and universities. In each one, there is at least one library or resource centre and in many of the research libraries, there are specialized libraries in the major faculties and institutes and special collections for in-depth research. The primary users of direct services from the libraries are the students, faculty, administration and alumni of the institution. However, most university libraries have their holdings in AMICUS and they contribute to resource sharing through interlibrary loan and borrowing. Increasingly their catalogues are available through the Internet. College library resource collections are tied directly to the programmes of each college and they tend to be less represented in national or multi-sectoral union catalogues. In some provinces, the collective holdings of all colleges are represented in a union catalogue. Unfortunately, the local alternate format collections of most colleges and universities are not reflected in AMICUS, because the libraries themselves treat these materials differently from the rest of their collections. They are not catalogued and recorded in the university catalogue, a tape of which is loaded into AMICUS on a regular basis.

Schools

Canada has more than 16,000 schools. As there have been no national statistical surveys on school libraries for many years, there is no current data on the holdings and services of school libraries in Canada. Through anecdotal evidence, it is known that in several provinces, the state of school libraries has declined because professionally trained librarians or teacher librarians have been removed; their place has been taken by teachers working part-time in the library or library technicians or parents and volunteers or administrative support staff. Moreover, budgets for collections have been re-allocated to technology needs. Yet there is research evidence that in professionally administered school library programmes, the information literacy and academic achievements of students are higher than schools without library programmes. (11) The alternate format resource centres of each province provide curricular material for print-disabled

students. These centres are dependent on school resources for production titles.

Producers

Production of alternate formats takes place in many locations and is contracted for by a number of players. The federal government contracts for alternate formats for all of its documents through tenders in the private sector.

As stated above, the various elements of the provincially operated educational system contract for and/or produce and/or provide alternate format materials for students.

The CNIB National Library for the Blind

The CNIB is recognized by most of the presenters and indeed international producers as the largest and most experienced alternate format producer and distributor in Canada. CNIB produces on behalf of its 100,000 registered users through the work of hundreds of dedicated volunteers, through contractual work and through the sale of its products to libraries for use by the public who identify themselves as print-disabled. 44% of its clientele are over 80 years of age and 80% are over 65; yet CNIB does not produce large print. All the demands of its current clientele cannot now be met and the CNIB is conscious that the demands will continue to grow as the population ages and, through health improvements, lives longer.

British Columbia Library Services Branch

For more than 25 years, British Columbia through the Library Services Branch of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs has produced alternate format materials in audio format for sale to all Canadian public libraries. Audiobooks are provided to BC public libraries at no cost. There are 5000 master titles.

Institut Nazareth et Louis Braille

The Government of Quebec supports the INLB which provides braille and audio materials directly to clients. Since 1995, the French audio titles produced by and in the studios of CNIB in Montreal are distributed by INLB.

In all other parts of Canada, not-for-profit and small for profit firms produce materials for use by print-disabled Canadians. The major not-for-profit producers are the CNIB for English materials in braille, audio and e-text and la Magnétothèque and CNIB for French audio.

Publishers

The 1999 edition of Quill & Quire's **The Book Trade in Canada** (12) records that there are more than 1200 publishers and 2600 bookstores in this country. This number includes not only the commercial publishers, whose

work is recorded in Statistics Canada's surveys, but also small presses and not-for-profit, scholarly, professional and topical associations who publish for their members and like-minded groups. Canada's federal government and the governments of the provinces, territories and municipalities are some of the most regular publishers of many types of materials from parliamentary, legislative, judicial and statistical series, to departmental publications, to royal commissions and special studies, to serial publications and to promotional and information pamphlets.

The Survey of Book Publishers and Exclusive Agents (13) is a census of all book publishers and exclusive agents in Canada. The 1998/99 survey covered 643 publishers (including those also acting as exclusive agents) and 57 firms solely functioning as exclusive agents...Book publishers produced 14,439 new titles in 1998/99 and reprinted 10,262 existing titles. Three-quarters of new and reprinted titles were Canadian-authored. Ninety-two percent of new and reprinted textbooks, but only 13% of mass-market paperbacks, were Canadian-authored.... The industry reported total revenues of $2.2 billion in 1998/99, including $133 million in direct exports and $43 million in grants recognized as revenues. Overall, publishers and exclusive agents generated a pre-tax profit of $137 million or 6% of revenues. However, only three-fifths of these firms operated above the break-even point.

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5. One Size Does Not Fit All

The Federal Disability Agenda has an overarching principle of full citizenship which is defined as the inclusion of persons with disabilities in all aspects of Canadian society. The three building blocks to full citizenship are disability supports, employment and income.

Disability supports are goods and services that assist persons with disabilities in overcoming barriers to participating fully in daily living, including economic and social activities. **In Unison** (14) identified three objectives for the future development of disability supports: accessibility, portability and an individual focus.

This Task Force has organized its findings and recommendations under the theme of disability supports because they are the means by which print-disabled Canadians may read and comprehend print and thus may further their education and learning, may find and sustain employment and live independently as citizens.

The consultations of the Task Force and the written briefs emphasized the importance of a consistent and equitable approach to disability supports across Canada. In the consultations held by HRDC in the preparation of the HALS 2001, consumers emphasized the primacy of disability supports.

Disability supports take a number of forms. In this report, the term is first applied to reading materials in multiple formats (braille, large print, audio and e-text) that allow print-disabled Canadians to decipher, understand and apply

the information. The term also refers to the standards that form the infrastructure and platforms on which accessible connectedness is founded and the hardware and software that assist print-disabled persons with the Internet, e-mail, text files and multi-media products. Disability supports is a term that also includes the continuous training that is required for staff, assistants and users of multiple formats and accessible technologies.

This report takes each of these categories of disability supports and addresses the state of the development in the area and the role that governments must assume in advancing the rights of Canadians with disabilities to equitable access to information.

Notwithstanding considerable efforts by various jurisdictions in Canada to provide assistive devices to persons with disabilities, significant gaps remain with respect to adequacy, consistency and equity within and across programmes and jurisdictions. Only four provinces (Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario and Quebec) provide public coverage for devices and none of these provides full access. In other provinces and for those who do not qualify for existing provincial programmes, Canadians with print disabilities often go without the equipment that could assist them in their lives. The mobility of Canadians between provinces, a fundamental Canadian principle, is restricted, by reason of inequitable services, for persons with all disabilities. This situation clearly goes against numerous recent government reports on disability supports that have encouraged the establishment of programmes to assist Canadians with disabilities in obtaining needed supports, including assistive information devices. At the federal level, support for devices has been demonstrated in various ways, including some compensation for the costs of disability provided through income tax relief. As well, through HRDC programmes (and related, cost-shared provincial programmes), funding for devices to be used in employment is often provided. The need, however, is greater than the supply of funding.

REC. 3. The Task Force recommends that the Federal Government act on the recommendations from "Implementing In Unison for Disability Supports. (15)"

REC. 4. The Task Force recommends that Human Resources Development Canada establish a universal support programme for funding print-disabled Canadians to acquire and be trained in the use of assistive technologies.

It is clear that multiple formats will continue to be needed for the next decade and beyond. Most submissions to the Task Force raised the role of publishers in facilitating the availability of multiple formats in a timely and affordable manner, especially as many publishers receive federal and provincial subsidies and other support programmes. The Copyright Act allows alternate format producers to make braille and audiobooks for Canadians with a perceptual impairment. It does not grant exemption for

producers of large print which is not only a staple for print-disabled *Canadians of every age but an essential for many senior Canadians.* During the National Strategy on the Integration of Persons with Disabilities, 1991 to 1996, the federal government financed a small matching grant programme for large print publishing through the NLC. Under this programme 57 titles were added to the Canadiana lists. The termination of that programme resulted in the return to a very limited output of commercially available Canadian titles. As a result, Canadians with print disabilities are not able to obtain Canadian content in a format accessible to many of them.

REC. 5. The Task Force recommends that Canadian Heritage seek an amendment to Section 32 of the Copyright Act to include exemption for large print publications.

In its submission, the National Broadcast Reading Service stated that it is still seeking an exemption for the adaptation of cinematographic works for the community of print-disabled Canadians on the principle that access to video is no different from access to print and that the technology is now available to provide print-disabled Canadians with the information provided through video. This use of video as a viable aid to persons with disabilities has not been previously recognized. The Task Force saw a short demonstration of a video with audio description and the blind members were able to fully understand what was playing.

REC. 6. The Task Force recommends that Canadian Heritage seek an amendment to the Copyright Act to include exemption for the non-commercial narrative description of cinematographic works.

Alternate format producers use a number of processes to reproduce texts. The most efficient and effective means is to have access to the final electronic master file from the publisher in a standardized format such as HTML or ASCII. This was proved in a study coordinated by the Book and Periodical Council (BPC) and financed by Industry Canada and Canadian Heritage in 1998 (16). To protect the rights of authors and publishers, it was recommended that a central clearinghouse of electronic files in standardized formats be established and funded by the federal government. This recommendation is included in the Federal Disability Agenda. Formal and informal requests for establishing the clearinghouse have not received attention.

Given the shortage of Canadian materials in multiple formats, (estimated at a maximum of 3% of total output) and the considerable investment of tax dollars in Canadian publishing, the Task Force recommends that no subsidies or tax benefits be granted to publishers by governments unless the publishers deposit final electronic files in a standard format in a national clearinghouse. To meet its mandate to acquire, preserve and make accessible the Canadian published heritage, the NLC is the most logical

home for the clearinghouse. The conditions for establishing and operating the clearinghouse should be based on the work already done through the BPC and should involve the participation of publishers and alternate format producers across Canada. The clearinghouse would have multiple roles: to be the repository for publisher final electronic files to be used by alternate format producers and to be the archive for e-files to preserve these works into the future.

REC. 7. The Task Force recommends that the Government of Canada establish and fund a clearinghouse for e-text to which Canadian publishers must make their works available.

REC. 8. The Task Force recommends that federal, provincial and territorial subsidies be available only to publishers which provide e-texts to the clearinghouse simultaneous with print publication.

Canada is the only OECD member that does not financially support the production of multiple alternate formats on a continuing basis. Materials for educational purposes from Kindergarten to Grade 12 are a provincial responsibility and the situation varies from province to province. For post-secondary students, the situation varies not only from province to province but also from institution to institution. There are at a very conservative estimate 50,000 special needs students studying at the post-secondary level. Of that number more than 50% have learning disabilities, many of which result in the need for alternate formats of the regular texts and recommended readings.

The National Librarian is committed to eliminating user fees to NLC's AMICUS bibliographic database services. NLC continues to pursue the implementation of the required policy and administrative changes within the Government of Canada to effect the removal of the user fees that are currently in place. The new Access AMICUS on the Web and AMICUS Z39.50 services continue to be offered without charge from their implementation in August 1999. NLC is proposing a tiered access to AMICUS, whereby simple searching of the NLC catalogue and the Canadian union catalogue will not require registration. Use of advanced features such as the ability to view and download MARC records or request interlibrary loans will require a user name and password. Information sessions, in-depth training, online tutorials, and online documentation will be offered to support the effective use of this key NLC service.

REC. 9. The Task Force recommends that the National Library of Canada keep the CANUC-H/CANWIP databases up-to-date, comprehensive (inclusive of new media, e.g. tactile), representative and available to all alternate format producers. Access to the databases must be free.

For a country that continues to be ranked first in the annual United Nations Human Development Report, the lack of federal contributions to the ongoing production of multiple formats for Canadian titles on which its citizens from all age groups, all ethnic, economic and social backgrounds and all locations depend is nothing short of shameful. To ignore or delay acknowledgement of this lack is to deny citizens of all ages access to Canadian content in a timely, affordable manner. Such a position contravenes the rights of Canadian citizens as granted in the Canadian Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms and also contradicts all statements and promises related to the Connecting Canadians Agenda.

REC. 10. The Task Force recommends that the Government of Canada, through Canadian Heritage, annually appropriate at least $7.5M, beginning FY 2001/2002, to support the production in Canada of multiple formats (audio/braille/large print) of materials which have authorship outside governments.

The Task Force has identified multiple format materials as an essential disability support for narrowing the gap related to access to information between Canadians with print disabilities in comparison with those who read and comprehend conventional print. The case has been made for considering large print as an alternate format susceptible to the same exemptions as braille and audiobooks. The alternative is to promote and provide incentives for expansion of large print publishing in the educational, recreational and training areas. It is a format which print-disabled persons with some vision find useful. It was said by many that audiobooks, even when well narrated by those understanding the subject and context, are the last but necessary choice of print-disabled readers.

Braille for those who have learned it is their expression of literacy. Braille permits a person to become and remain literate. In planning for the future, its importance for work and learning, being kept informed and engaged, communications and enjoyment must be recognized. Support for braille production and use by governments is essential to maintaining a literate society. The growth of other alternate formats has tended to diminish the perceived need for braille and, in fact, some jurisdictions do not support the provision of braille .

REC. 11. The Task Force recommends that braille be recognized as a standard alternate format.

The Task Force heard from many presenters that the amount of braille materials is limited and not growing fast enough. These same presenters spoke of activities happening in other countries, such as the United Kingdom and the United States, which make braille available through the Web or other means. These activities are now not available to Canadian braille users.

REC. 12. The Task Force recommends that the National Librarian expand the availability of braille materials by negotiating access for Canadians with national and international providers of braille materials.

The Task Force also heard from several presenters that there is a need for full and open access to the large collections of special needs materials from RFB&D by means of a negotiated national arrangement. Currently, each organization must negotiate its own relationship on behalf of its users.

REC. 13. The Task Force recommends that the National Librarian negotiate a Canadian site licence with Recordings for the Blind and Dyslexic.

Through the Connecting Canadians Agenda and its Government On-line component, the Government of Canada has committed itself to being the most connected country in the world and to delivering its programmes and services on-line to its citizens by 2004. It has also stated its intent to be a model user and a model employer. This commitment is based on the premise that electronic commerce will dominate transactions and services in a networked, globalized world and that Canada must move steadily towards the knowledge-based economy, at the same time that it advances and promotes the values and contributions of Canadians to the social and cultural richness of the world. In the articulation of its Beyond Connectedness Agenda, the federal government has shown that it remains convinced that the new information and communications technologies can narrow the gaps that now divide Canadians living in very diverse economic and social circumstances, urban and rural parts of the country and groups with different traditions and languages. It also has sponsored studies that point out where the digital divide is experienced. (17) Many print-disabled Canadians are dependent on technologies not only for their education and livelihood but also for everyday survival and independence. Accessible technologies are therefore a lifeline and technologies that are accessible for print-disabled Canadians can be used by those who are not print-disabled.

Having participated in the development and application of standards, the

Canadian government itself can demonstrate its commitment to accessibility by demanding that its own partners and producers and service providers adhere to those standards. Canada, either directly through agencies of the federal government, through activities it supports or through the private sector, has been involved in the development of the Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) web standards, new e-book standards such DAISY (Digital Audio Information System, an international consortium developing a new digitized method of producing audiobooks) and NISO (the National Information Standards Organization which is developing a standard for the next generation of the audiobook), bibliographic, indexing and metadata standards and work on privacy, encryption and intellectual property security and protection.

Another form of standards for which there is a desperate need in Canada and indeed internationally is for alternate format production. There are almost as many large print and e-text standards as there are producers. Braille standards are being worked on in Canada and elsewhere.

REC. 14. The Task Force recommends that the Government of Canada, through Industry Canada, take a lead in participating in and funding the development, adoption and promotion of information and access standards such as NISO/DAISY/WAI and alternate format production standards.

Governments in the United States and Europe have put into place procurement policies and/or legislation which require the purchase of accessible goods and services. The private sector has acted in line with this direction. Canada's governments have not yet used this regulatory stick but have continued to depend on the carrot of good citizenship to promote accessible purchasing.

REC. 15. The Task Force recommends that governments at all levels use the force of procurement to promote and encourage the adoption of universal design standards for accessibility; only materials complying with such standards should be purchased.

The uptake and use of assistive technologies lags behind mainstream technologies for a number of reasons. There are significant cost issues involved in the acquisition and use of assistive technologies. These technologies, by nature of their small market, are often more expensive than their mainstream counterparts. For example, the cost of a single braille cell is about $60, which means that to have a full screen of braille would cost about $120,000. Single line readers are still expensive but can be managed by some even without financial support. Most persons who use assistive

technologies are trained on one brand of hardware and software and prefer to keep to that brand. There is a steep learning curve and one that is not without difficulty. Readers, portable note takers, and laptops can be set up to meet the specific needs of a persons with a print disability. It is not until after the newest version of a software is released that the assistive technology developers start developing their technologies.

Canada has been a leader in the development of information and communications assistive technologies. To keep that position the investment in research and development must be expanded. Currently, only the Ontario Government has a dedicated research and development programme and it is under review. Efforts are underway through the Federal Disability Agenda to secure dedicated R&D funds for assistive technologies. While this issue is outside the scope of this Task Force, the members endorse this element of the Agenda and encourage the government to find the necessary funding.

The Task Force has discussed both access to information and access to publications. Currently, Canadians with print disabilities do not receive equitable services from their public libraries due to the lack of available alternate format publications. As well, government information is not often available in multiple formats at the same time as it is released to the general public. The recommendation which follows addresses these two separate but sometimes linked ideas. When two Canadians, one print-disabled and one not enter a public library, they should both have access to the same service. If a government is distributing information, all Canadians should receive it in the format that they require.

REC. 16. The Task Force recommends that the Treasury Board Secretariat require that all federal print material be available concurrently in multiple formats on demand.

To ensure that available materials are usable and useful, all personnel who interact with the public must be trained in the use of the information and the tools that support this information and be able to train those for whom the materials are designed.

REC. 17. The Task Force recommends that departments and agencies of government at all levels train their personnel to be aware of the needs of print-disabled Canadians, of the availability of multiple format materials and in the use of the related assistive technology.

Some federal government alternate format materials are provided in the Depository Services Programme (DSP), a programme which places copies of federal publications in public, university/college, special and government libraries to ensure access to government information for Canadians. The

libraries sign an agreement to maintain and organize the material for use by the public but there is no cost for the information other than the space and human resources required to make it available. One unfunded element of the Federal Disability Agenda is the extension of the Alternate Format DSP.

REC. 18. The Task Force recommends that all levels of government make their publications available in multiple formats through the Canadian library system at no additional cost to the library.

The deplorable state of public library services for print-disabled Canadians is not a result of a lack of interest on the part of library boards. The problem is one of resources. Even for those libraries with funding to purchase materials in alternate formats, there are insufficient materials available for purchase.

Canadian public libraries have a long history of cooperation and resource sharing. Although interlibrary loan systems function highly effectively for traditional print materials, the systems often break down when a library is dealing in alternate format materials. Borrowing and lending between various types of libraries are easily managed, but communication among producers of alternate format materials is often ad hoc and uneven. In its submission, the Calgary Public Library wrote:

> "We encourage initiatives that support the sharing, rather than the duplication of resources. Therefore, we encourage the NLC to support all negotiations with international libraries for the blind and other accessible content providers. In addition, here in Canada we could move towards a greater sharing of accessible resources by interlinking library catalogues, including that of the CNIB, using a standard protocol, Z39.50, to facilitate the development of a virtual national library of alternate format materials."

While several departments within the Government of Canada have had programmes for which libraries are eligible (e.g. Young Canada Works of Canadian Heritage and the Office of Learning Technologies of HRDC), much remains to be done.

REC. 19. The Task Force recommends that the Government of Canada, through Canadian Heritage, recognize the primary role of the public library system by funding services for the use of print-disabled members of their communities.

REC. 20. The Task Force recommends that the National Library of Canada provide leadership and support to Canadian libraries to facilitate interlibrary loan and encourage the sharing of materials in alternate formats.

Since Canadians who need materials in alternate formats have, in the past, often been disappointed by their public libraries, special efforts need to be made to ensure that the services and materials are appropriately promoted. Every submission highlighted the need for training of staff, users and their assistants.

Many of the Task Force submissions cited the need for changes to the curricula and continuing education for teachers, information specialists, library technicians and librarians. Issues of accessibility, adaptive technologies and services for persons with print disabilities should be included in core courses and in all continuing education programming.

In addition to the Large Print Programme during the National Strategy on the Integration of Persons with Disabilities, the NLC also received funding for the Adaptive Technology in Libraries Programme. In this programme, 120 Canadian libraries received matching grants (up to $15,000) for equipment that enabled persons with print handicaps to use conventional printed materials.

REC. 21. The Task Force recommends that the National Library of Canada's Adaptive Technology Grant Programme for Libraries, which operated from 1991 to 1995, be re-established.

Every presenter and almost every written submission highlighted the need for regular and effective training for print-disabled Canadians and for the staff who work with them. Given the complex range of interdependent issues that affect the ability of individuals with print disabilities to access print through multiple formats, it is evident that special training is required to meet their needs. Through special funding from the Gates Foundation, mobile training labs have been made available for use by public libraries in most provinces and territories. These labs, which are equipped with the most advanced technology, should be upgraded to include the latest adaptive technology and used as training venues for staff and users with print disabilities in rural and remote communities.

REC. 22. The Task Force recommends that the Government of Canada, through Human Resource Development Canada and Industry Canada, fund training programmes for staff of Canadian libraries and for users of adaptive technology.

The Library Book Rate is a lower rate of postage for libraries mailing books between libraries and to patrons for interlibrary loans. Photocopies, tapes, videos, microformats, etc. are not eligible. NLC, CLA and l'Association des sciences et des techniques de la documentation (ASTED) have tried for many years to have the non-books made eligible.

REC. 23. The Task Force recommends that Canadian Heritage, working in collaboration with the National Library of Canada, the CLA and ASTED, negotiate the delivery of alternate format materials as an integral component of the Library Book Rate.

Currently, braille and audio materials may be circulated to the legally blind postage free. This support is offered through a worldwide postal convention. In Canada, the convention is supported by Canadian Heritage but is not extended to those with a learning disability nor does the subsidy include distribution of e-text and other digital materials.

REC. 24. The Task Force recommends that Canadian Heritage seek a method to expand Free Matter for the Blind to include all print-disabled persons and to include new formats.

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6. Conclusion

In order to fulfil the promise and to implement the actions recommended in this report, a continuing organization representative of all stakeholders must be established. In responding to the submissions, the Task Force realized that the National Library of Canada, with the necessary dedicated resources, is the most appropriate agency to provide leadership and support to this new group.

REC. 25. The Task Force recommends that the National Librarian of Canada immediately establish a Council on Access to Print Information to provide advice, recommend funding, monitor progress and make recommendations regarding the implementation of this report. Its membership should be drawn from consumers, advocacy groups, librarians, public servants, publishers and alternate format producers.

Most of the time and effort of this Task Force has been spent in looking at the present and the near term. Some of the submissions were very far-reaching and indeed futuristic. While the members are enthusiastic about the future, the recommendations are for actions which can be accomplished or, at least, initiated in the short to medium term. The Task Force concentrated on recommendations which are proactive and possible and which give the leaders in government the tools required to fill the access gap.

The recommendations in this report, when implemented, will improve access to information and publications. The primary beneficiaries will be those Canadians with a print disability. The added advantage is that better-designed, produced and delivered information will benefit all Canadians. As the population ages, multiple formats will become more the norm than the exception. As the technologies proliferate and become more sophisticated, multiple formats will predominate. Regular, carefully constructed communication about these changes is fundamental to their acceptance and use.

REC. 26. The Task Force recommends that in conjunction with every programme designed to increase accessibility for print-disabled Canadians there must be an aggressive programme of public awareness.

The best programme in the world will not be effective unless the people for whom it is intended have been consulted in its design and are made aware of its existence. It is not enough to provide. People must know that governments are providing in response to their needs. When these recommendations are acted upon in a coordinated and timely manner, Canada will be the world leader in access to information for all its citizens.

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Notes

Note 1

Other legislative and policy bases for this report include the National Library Act which gives authority to the National Librarian for various issues, the Copyright Act which grants exemptions for the print-disabled, the Canadian Human Rights and Employment Equity Acts which provide protection and a complaints mechanism, the Provincial Library Acts that direct the operation of public libraries and the Federal Communications and Common Look and Feel Policies which direct the Federal Government in dealing with all Canadians.

Note 2. Federal Disability Agenda

The Federal Disability Agenda is an agreed-upon set of plans, programmes and priorities for the federal portion of the delivery of **"In Unison"**. It was developed with HRDC in the lead and with 14 federal agencies and departments in partnership and its general directions are outlined in **"Future Directions"**. The Agenda received policy approval from the Cabinet in Spring 1998. Only small parts of the Agenda were funded in the 2000 budget. Committees and working groups have been established across the federal government to bring life to the agenda. Many of the recommendations in this report echo unfunded portions of the Agenda.

Note 3 Libraries

There are two recent studies on the subject of public libraries. One is from a partnership led by the CLA that contracted with EKOS to look at **Canadians, Public Libraries and the Information Highway** which indicated that public libraries represent an important point of access to the information highway for many Canadians.

In the other, the Canadian Centre for Management Development and its partners established several research projects, including research to better understand citizens' current levels of satisfaction with service delivery, the drivers of that satisfaction, and citizens' priorities for service improvement. To this end, a national survey on citizen attitudes on public sector service (led by CCMD and co-sponsored by Manitoba, New Brunswick, Newfoundland, Ontario, Canada Post and the federal Treasury Board Secretariat) was developed and sent to 35,000 Canadian households in April 1998. Erin Research then generated a report based on the survey findings entitled Citizens First. This report not only sets the record straight about citizens' ratings of public sector services, but also provides managers with clear direction for continuing to improve service to citizens. It is in this report that public libraries score second just under fire departments.

In this report, a distinction is made between public libraries serving their local communities and Canadian libraries which include school, college, university, public and special libraries which may be used by different publics.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1. Mandate and Composition of Task Force

To address the need for inclusive public policy in providing access to information for print-disabled Canadians.

To complete a final report by October 31, 2000, with the results of the consultations and a recommended plan, budget and policy framework to address the stated access to information requirements of print-disabled Canadians.

Members

Honourable Mr. Justice James K. Hugessen of the Federal Court, chair

Gwynneth Evans, Director General, National and International Programmes, National Library of Canada

Elizabeth Gayda, President, Learning Disabilities Association of Canada, Ottawa, Ontario

Barbara Greeniaus, Director, Library Services Branch, Ministry of Municipal Affairs, Victoria, B.C.

Monique Lecavalier, Assistant Director, Bibliothèque des lettres et des sciences humaines, Université de Montréal, Montreal, Quebec.

Donna Pletz Passey, Chair, Canadian Association of Educational Resource Centres

Graham Stoodley, Q.C., Member of the CNIB National Board of Directors and Chair of the Client Services Committee

André Vincent, President and Director General, Les éditions du troisième oeil, Longueuil, Quebec

APPENDIX 2. International Models

There are many models for the support of access to information for persons with print disabilities found around the world.

Most European countries have government funded national libraries for the blind which are responsible for the production and dissemination of most alternate format materials. The funding ranges from full funding, such as for the Danish National Library for the Blind and the Swedish Library of Talking

Books and Braille which produce all formats to partial funding such as the UK National Library for the Blind which is involved in braille production only. In Spain, the support is given to ONCE, the Spanish Association of the Blind. This support is not directly from the Government but rather through legislation, all funds raised by the National Lottery are given to that organization.

In Australia, there is some government support given to the Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind. In 1999, the Government provided 30% of the funding required. The Government of New Zealand provides some support to the Royal New Zealand Foundation for the Blind.

The model that was most often referred to during the consultations and which is the most familiar to print-disabled Canadians is the free national library program of braille and recorded materials for blind and physically handicapped persons which is administered by the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS) of the US Library of Congress. Under a special provision of the US copyright law and with the permission of authors and publishers of works not covered by the provision, NLS selects and produces full-length books and magazines in braille and on recorded disc and cassette. Reading materials are distributed to a cooperating network of regional and sub-regional (local) libraries where they are circulated to eligible borrowers. Reading materials and playback machines are sent to borrowers and returned to libraries by postage-free mail. Established by an act of Congress in 1931 to serve blind adults, the program was expanded in 1952 to include children, in 1962 to provide music materials, and again in 1966 to include individuals with other physical impairments that prevent the reading of standard print. From a beginning of 19 libraries, the network has expanded to 57 regional and 81 sub-regional libraries throughout the US. More than 22 million recorded and braille books and magazines were circulated to a readership of 764,000 in 1999. The NLS program is funded annually by Congress. The fiscal year 2000 appropriation is $US 47,984,000. Regional and sub-regional libraries receive funding from state, local, and federal sources. Through an additional appropriation to the U.S. Postal Service, books and materials are mailed as "Free Matter for the Blind or Handicapped." The combined expenditure for the program is approximately $135 million annually. About 71 percent of the NLS annual appropriation is budgeted for books, equipment, and related materials and 29 percent for support services.

There is also some government support to RFB&D which is celebrating its 50th anniversary as the US's primary educational library for people with print disabilities. They have a 77,000-title library of taped textbooks, reference and professional materials for people who cannot read standard print because of a disability. Internationally, they serve nearly 78,000 people with print disabilities and have titles available for students in kindergarten through post-graduate studies. The service is made possible by the dedicated work of nearly 5,000 trained volunteers at 33 RFB&D studios across the United States. They are funded by the contributions received from generous donors, including individuals, corporations, foundations and government agencies. They receive US Government funding under contracts of $US6,470,830 from total operating expenses of $US37,261,724. RFB&D distributed 243,231 audio and e-Text books in 1999. The average number of books circulated

each day was 858. There were 81,468 audio and e-Text books in the CV Starr Master Library with 4,230 new audio and e-Text books produced in 1999.

Government support is not uniform across Canada's major trading partners but every country has a line item somewhere in its national budget to support the production and distribution of alternate format materials for print-disabled citizens.

APPENDIX 3. Consultation documents

Task Force on Access to Information for Print Disabled Canadians

Consultation Document - July 24, 2000

Introduction

There are two purposes for this document:

The first is to ask if you want to participate in a public meeting of the Task Force. You do not need to have a written submission to be able to make a presentation to the Task Force. We ask you to reply to this question as soon as possible. If you have access to e-mail and/or the Internet, please use one of the following addresses:

e-mail **accessinfo@nlc-bnc.ca**
OR discussion list ACCESSINFO-L@INFOSERV.NLC-BNC.CA.

To subscribe to the listserv, send an e-mail to the following address:

LISTSERV@INFOSERV.NLC-BNC.CA In the body of the message type: SUBSCRIBE ACCESSINFO-L Firstname Lastname

The e-mail comes only to the Task Force Secretariat; the discussion list is open to all who subscribe.

If you do not have access to the electronic means of communication, please call the Task Force Secretariat at 613-995-3904; or send a FAX to 613-947-2916; or send a letter to Task Force on Access to Information for Print Disabled Canadians, c/o National and International Programs, National Library of Canada, 395 Wellington St., Ottawa, ON K1A 0N4

The second is to give you some suggestions about the kinds of written information that would be useful to the Task Force in completing its mandate.

The questions are only a guide. You need not answer them all. You may also wish to raise other issues related to access to information services for print disabled Canadians, and we encourage you to do so.

Use as much paper/bandwidth as you want so that the Task Force will be able to make the best recommendations possible. Where possible, concrete examples will be most helpful.

You may sign your response to the Task Force or you may leave it anonymous. We ask that these submissions be received by the Task Force no later than September 18. Please note that you may come to a public consultation and present a written or oral statement. We ask that the written submissions be received by the Task Force as soon as possible but NO LATER than September 18.

QUESTION 1. Do you wish to make a presentation to the Task Force?

If so, at which location?

Winnipeg August 22
Halifax August 27
Vancouver - September 9
Toronto September 16
Montreal September 23
Ottawa September 25

There will be a limited number of spaces available for presentation and they will be awarded on a first come-first served basis. Please let us know your intentions as soon as possible so that we can assure enough time and space. Send us a note at accessinfo@nlc-bnc.ca or ACCESSINFO-L@INFOSERV.NLC-BNC.CA or call 913-995-3904 or FAX 613-947-2916. We shall then send you a note about the place, date and time of the session in the city you have chosen.

QUESTION 2. Some suggested topics for you to consider

The Terms of Reference of the Task Force are:

To consult with print disabled persons and information producers and service providers in government, the not-for-profit and private sectors on the systems and services needed to support a national sustainable service of access to information and knowledge for print disabled persons

To review and synthesize recent Canadian reports that identify for print disabled Canadians

To study production and service models from other jurisdictions

To assess their relevance for Canadians

To complete a final report by October 31, 2000, with the results of the consultations and a recommended plan, budget and policy framework to address the requirements of the Vision statement. (See the mandate statement on the website http//www.nlc-bnc.ca/accessinfo)

Given these terms of reference, the Task Force must examine the needs for access to information of the communities of Canadians with print disabilities and the strengths and limitations of those agencies serving them.

Suggested questions for your consideration:

1. How would you define print disabled?
2. What does the term access to information mean to you?
3. From which agencies, if any, do you receive access to information services?
4. Are there information services that you need that are NOT NOW available to you or that you cannot afford?
5. How do you read print?
6. Do you use special equipment to read or to get access to the information you require?
7. How is your equipment supplied and maintained?
8. Is your special equipment available to you at home? If not, where do you go to use it?
9. What other equipment would help you to access print?
10. What for you are the most important reasons to have access to the printed word or electronic information?
11. What kinds of information do you use regularly?
12. In what formats do you get the information you use regularly?
13. From what sources do you get most of these formats? Name as many sources as you use regularly?
14. Are there particular topics or subjects where it is difficult to find appropriate materials in the format that you prefer?
15. Do you use the services of information specialists like librarians, resource teachers or resource persons to obtain the information that you need?
16. Are there language issues (English, French, other) in accessing information that you wish to bring to the Task Force's attention?
17. Are there issues about the timeliness or the quality of the materials in alternate format that you receive?
18. What difficulty do you have using the Internet and new computer and

communications technologies?

19. Are there Statutes, Policies, Regulations, Government reports, Court cases or decisions that apply to your concerns about access to information? If so, what are they? Please be as precise as possible.

20. Are there other questions you wish to pose?

If there are other aspects of access to information, as you understand the term, that the Task Force should address, please describe them

We look forward to hearing from you and hope that you will be able to attend a public consultation session.

APPENDIX 4. List of submissions

ASSOCIATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS:

Accessible Transportation Program of the Canadian Transportation Agency

Association québécoise pour les troubles d'apprentissage/Learning Disabilities Association of Quebec

Alberta Learning Materials Resource Centre for the Visually Impaired

Burnaby Public Library

Canadian National Institute for the Blind

Calgary Public Library

Canadian Association of Disability Service Providers in Post-Secondary Education

Canadian Association of Educational Resource Centres for Alternate Format Materials

Canadian Council of the Blind

Canadian Library Association

Canadian National Institute for the Blind- Québec Division

CÉGEP du Vieux Montréal- Service d'Aide à l'Integration des Élèves

Coalition of Persons with Disabilities - Newfoundland and Labrador

Council of Canadians with Disabilities

L'Institut Nazareth et Louis-Braille

Learning Disabilities Association of Canada

Learning Disabilities Association of Canada-Board

Learning Disabilities Association of New Brunswick

Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario

Learning Opportunities Task Force- Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities

London Public Library

National Broadcast Reading Service Inc.

National Federation of the Blind: Advocates for Equality

North Vancouver Public Library

Nova Scotia League for Equal Opportunities

Nova Scotia and Western Colchester County District of CNIB

Office of Learning Technologies - Loewen

Saint Mary's University-Ferguson Library for Print Handicapped Students

Saskatoon Public Library

Starling Access Services

Tactile Vision Inc.

TBASE Communications Inc.

Toronto Public Library

University of Ottawa, Library

University of Ottawa, Centre for Special Services

W. Ross Macdonald School-Resource Services Library

INDIVIDUALS:

Regina Ash-Ralph

Monique Beaudoin
Peggy Brown
Alan Conway
Roy Cooper
Barbara Coyle
Bill Crawford
Ron Filleul
Marjorie Fulton
Shohreh Hadian
Jean Jackson
Eric Jordan
Ingrid E. Laue
Penny Leclair
Jean Ann Ledwell
Brian Lendrum
Leo Lombard
Mary Lorefice
Leah MacInnes
Yousef Matuk
Dorothy Macnaughton
Robert McCoy
Lorraine McQueen
Katherine Nessner-Filion
Marianne M. Park
John Rae
Donnie Saulnier
Michael Schwake
Ron Sharpe
Caroline Sladek
David Stinson
Margaret Thomson
Vince Tomassetti
Wil van der Elst
Julianne Verney
Tim Verney
Kathleen Williams
Raymond Young

APPENDIX 5. List of presenters

Ross Eadie
Info Equity Inc. — Winnipeg

Marilyn MacKinnon
Winnipeg — Winnipeg

Earl Flynn
Nova Scotia League for Equal Opportunities — Halifax

Peter Webster
St. Mary's University-Ferguson Library for Print Handicapped — Halifax

Students

Andrew Fuller Learning Disabilities Association of Nova Scotia	Halifax
Dennis McCormack and Chris Judge Western N.S. and Colchester County Canadian National Institute for the Blind	Halifax
Lorraine McQueen Wolfville	Halifax
Millie Leblanc Learning Disabilities Association of New Brunswick	Halifax
Eric Jordan Halifax	Halifax
Mary Ann Epp Canadian Association of Educational Resource Centres for Alternate Format Materials (CAER)	Vancouver
Brian Lendrum Whitehorse	Vancouver
Craig MacLean Canadian Association of the Deaf-Blind	Vancouver
Richard Marion National Federation of the Blind: Advocates for Equality Lower Mainland Chapter	Vancouver
Neil Graham Council of Canadians with Disabilities	Toronto
Claire Waldron and Diane Wagner Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario	Toronto
Robert Fenton National Federation of the Blind: Advocates for Equality	Toronto
Cecilia Anczurowski Tactile Vision	Toronto
Fran Cutler Canadian National Institute for the Blind	Toronto
Betsy McMullen Learning Disabilities Association of Canada	Toronto
Gabriel Collard, Paul-Henrie Buteau and Pierre Ferland	

Institut Nazareth et Louis Braille	Montreal
Denise Marquez and Christiane Brisson L'Association québécoise des troubles d'apprentissage	Montreal
Michelle Brulé Québec Division of CNIB	Montreal
Daniel Fiset CÉGEP du Vieux Montréal	Montreal
Joan Wolforth Canadian Association of Disability Service Providers in Post-Secondary Education	Montreal
Catherine Geoffroy TECSO	Montreal
Paul Granville Ottawa	Montreal
Irene Lambert Montreal	Montreal
Penny Leclair Ottawa	Ottawa
Monique Beaudoin Hull	Ottawa
Barbara Coyle Ottawa	Ottawa
Len Fowler TBASE	Ottawa
Jeffrey de Fourestier Ottawa	Ottawa
Roy Cooper Ottawa	Ottawa
Ryan Klomp University of Ottawa, Centre for Special Services	Ottawa
Susan Barker Ottawa	Ottawa
Robert Trimbee National Broadcast Reading Service Toronto	Ottawa

Angelo Nikias
Ottawa — Ottawa

Claudette Gudbranson
Learning Disabilities Association of Canada — Ottawa

APPENDIX 6. Glossary and list of acronyms

Access – for the purposes of this report is the ability of those who are print-disabled to receive, decode and comprehend and communicate information so that they may benefit from the information as sighted persons do.

Accessible – for the purposes of this report means the transformation of print into formats that can be read, decoded and comprehended by those who do not read regular print

Adaptive technology or assistive technology – used interchangeably in this report to encompass all the hardware and software to make electronic information accessible for those with print disabilities (e.g. screen reader, voice-output software, touch screens)

Assistive devices or disability supports – used interchangeably to refer to the many technologies that provide assistance to persons with print disabilities (white cane, large print, audiocassette)

Audio cassette – audio tape enclosed in a plastic container

Audio tape – generic name for sound recorded on magnetic tape

Audiobook – material narrated or produced from synthetic speech which replicates the material found in a printed work

Braille – system of reading and writing for blind and partially sighted people developed by Louis Braille where letters are formed by raised dots embossed on paper in groups of six – three high and two wide

Digitization – the process of transferring information content from one traditional format into a digitally-readable version

E-text – the creation and dissemination of information by electronic means, especially by the use of optical disc formats (CD-ROM in particular) and networking.

Format – appearance or make-up of a publication; layout or presentation of items in machine-readable form; physical type of material

Large print – books for partially-sighted readers, printed in a clear, large point typeface

Tactile materials – raised or embossed impressions of maps, pictures, diagrams that may be read and comprehended by a print-disabled person through the use of touch.

ACRONYMS LISTING

NLC – National Library of Canada

CNIB – Canadian National Institute for the Blind

ADA – Americans with Disabilities Act

HRDC – Human Resources Development Canada

CLA – Canadian Library Association

RFB&D – Recordings for the Blind and Dyslexic

INLB – L'Institut Nazareth et Louis Braille

HALS – Health and Activities Limitations Survey

CCD – Council of Canadians with Disabilities

NFB:AE – National Federation of the Blind: Advocates for Equality

CAER – Canadian Association of Educational Resource Centres

INCA – Institut nationale canadien pour les aveugles

LDAO – Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario

CADSPPE – Canadian Association of Disability Service Providers in Post-Secondary Education

DSP – Depository Services Programme

BPC – Book and Periodical Council

OECD – Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

CANUC-H – catalogue of alternate formats

CANWIP – catalogue of works in progress

DAISY – Digital Audio Information System

NISO – National Information Standards Organization

IP – intellectual property

R&D – research and development

ASTED – Association des sciences et des techniques de la documentation

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APPENDIX 8. Implementation Planning Framework

Part of the mandate of the Task Force was to develop a set of recommendations with accountability, costing and timelines. The timelines used are:

short term: to be able to be implemented in FY2001/2002

medium-term: to be able to be implemented before 2005

long-term: as soon after that as possible

Most of the recommendations include refereence to a lead agency with the responsibility for implementation.

Where research has been done, costs have been associated with recommendations. Some of the funding required will be from the federal budgeting system while the rest will have to come from provincial and municipal budgets.

In each case, the recommendations begin with:

The Task Force recommends that:

REC. 1. self-identification be sufficient to give a person with learning disabilities the right of access to multiple alternate format materials.

Long term
Policy development
Human Resources Development Canada

REC. 2. the Canadian National Institute for the Blind energetically pursue the extension of its library services to all print-disabled Canadians.

long term
$$$

REC. 3. the Federal Government act on the recommendations from "Implementing In Unison for Disability Supports. "

Short term
Policy development
Human Resources Development Canada

REC. 4. Human Resources Development Canada establish a universal support programme for funding print-disabled Canadians to acquire and be trained in the use of assistive technologies.

Medium term
Policy development
$$$$

REC. 5. Canadian Heritage seek an amendment to Section 32 of the Copyright Act to include exemption for large print publications.

Long term
$15-25K

REC. 6. Canadian Heritage seek an amendment to the Copyright Act to include exemption for the non-commercial narrative description of cinematographic works.

Long term
$15-25K

REC. 7. the Government of Canada establish and fund a clearinghouse for e-text to which Canadian publishers must make their works available.

Short term and ongoing
National Library of Canada
$200,000 to establish, $75,000/year to operate

REC. 8. federal, provincial and territorial subsidies be available only to publishers which provide e-texts to the clearinghouse simultaneous with print publication.

policy development
ongoing

REC. 9. the National Library of Canada keep the CANUC-H/CANWIP databases up-to-date, comprehensive (inclusive of new media, e.g. tactile), representative and available to all alternate format producers. Access to the databases must be free.

Short term and ongoing
$150,000/year

REC. 10. the Government of Canada, through Canadian Heritage, annually appropriate at least $7.5M, beginning FY 2001/2002, to support the production in Canada of multiple formats (audio/braille/large print) of materials which have authorship outside governments.

Short term and ongoing
$7.5M/year

REC. 11. braille be recognized as a standard alternate format.

policy development
ongoing

REC. 12. the National Librarian expand the availability of braille materials by negotiating access for Canadians with national and international providers of braille materials.

Short term and ongoing
$15-$20K/year

REC. 13. the National Librarian negotiate a Canadian site licence with Recordings for the Blind and Dyslexic.

Short term and ongoing
$25-$50K/year

REC. 14. the Government of Canada, through Industry Canada, take a lead in participating in and funding the development, adoption and promotion of information and access standards such as NISO/DAISY/WAI and alternate format production standards.

Short term and ongoing
$100,000/year

REC. 15. governments at all levels use the force of procurement to promote and encourage the adoption of universal design standards for accessibility; only materials complying with such standards should be purchased.

Short term and ongoing
Treasury Board of Canada
$50,000/year

REC. 16. the Treasury Board Secretariat require that all federal print material be available concurrently in multiple formats on demand.

Short term and ongoing
Policy development
$$ across departments and agencies

REC. 17. departments and agencies of government at all levels train their personnel to be aware of the needs of print-disabled Canadians, of the availability of multiple format materials and in the use of the related assistive technology.

long term
$$ across departments and agencies

REC. 18. all levels of government make their publications available in multiple formats through the Canadian library system at no additional cost to the library.

Long term for all levels
Federal Short term through the DSP
$50,000/year

REC. 19. the Government of Canada, through Canadian Heritage, recognize the primary role of the public library system by funding services for the use of print-disabled members of their communities.

medium term
$$$$$

REC. 20. the National Library of Canada provide leadership and support to Canadian libraries to facilitate interlibrary loan and encourage the sharing of materials in alternate formats.

short term
$25,000

REC. 21. the National Library of Canada's Adaptive Technology Grant Programme for Libraries, which operated from 1991 to 1995, be re-established.

Medium term and for 5 years
$500,000/year

REC. 22. the Government of Canada, through Human Resource Development Canada and Industry Canada, fund training programmes for staff of Canadian libraries and for users of adaptive technology.

medium term
>$$$$$$

REC. 23. Canadian Heritage, working in collaboration with the National Library of Canada, the CLA and ASTED, negotiate the delivery of alternate format materials as an integral component of the Library Book Rate.

Long term
>$1,000,000/year

REC. 24. Canadian Heritage seeks a method to expand Free Matter for the Blind to include all print-disabled persons and to include new formats.

Long term
>$1,000,000/year

REC. 25. the National Librarian of Canada immediately establish a Council on Access to Print Information to provide advice, recommend funding, monitor progress and make recommendations regarding the implementation of this report. Its membership should be drawn from consumers, advocacy groups, librarians, public servants, publishers and alternate format producers.

Short term and ongoing
$500,000/year including office to manage

REC. 26. in conjunction with every programme designed to increase accessibility for print-disabled Canadians there must be an aggressive programme of public awareness.

policy development

Copyright. The National Library of Canada. (*Revised*: 2000-10-31).